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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 30, 2009

Summary: Reports pertaining to the situation in Swat dominated headlines in all dailies on Friday. Newspapers reported that the "government has worked out a new strategy to combat militancy in Swat." Reports and photographs of Prime Minister Gilani's participation in the World Economic Forum session in Davos also garnered front page coverage. Newspapers quoted the Prime Minister as saying that "force alone cannot defeat terrorists." Also highlighted were reports that Lahore police nabbed three men "said to be Indian agents" for their alleged involvement in terrorist activities. In a dispatch from London, the English daily, "Dawn," reported that "U.S. plans to send letter to Iran's supreme leader Khamenei aimed at unfreezing U.S.-Iranian relations."

Commenting on President Obama's Al Arabiya interview, the English daily, "Dawn," noted that "we hope that his desire for a new chapter in relations with the Muslim world will be translated into action, and that he possesses the common sense to realize that it is unresolved issues like Palestine and Kashmir that breed terrorists." Another English daily, "The Nation," observed that "the U.S., whose policies radicalized the tribal areas, including a traditionally peaceful Swat, into a militant stronghold, bears the primary responsibility to help heal the wounds. Unless the exercise is urgently undertaken, the battle for winning the hearts and minds will be lost." End Summary.

News Stories

"Fresh Strategy To Crush Swat Militants; Malik Names Terror Outfits Behind Insurgency" "Dawn" (01/30)

"Prime Minister's Adviser on Interior Affairs Rehman Malik told the Senate on Thursday that a new strategy had been worked out to combat militancy in Swat. Winding up a discussion on the situation in Swat, he said he was confident that law enforcers would succeed in flushing out terrorists from the valley in a few weeks."

"Force Along Can't Defeat Terrorists, Gilani" "Dawn" (01/30)

"President Barack Obama should deepen U.S. engagement in Afghanistan but show more restraint in Pakistan, ministers said on Thursday as the volatile region took centre stage in Davos. Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani told delegates that U.S. drone attacks on Pakistani territory were 'counterproductive' and called for a new approach by Obama's administration.... 'I don't think military action is the only solution to the problems,' said Mr. Gilani, who called for development and dialogue to be part of a three-pronged

approach to tackling militants."

"Zardari, Gilani Know Drone Hits Inside Out" "The News" (01/30)

"President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani have been fully aware of U.S. strategy of drones attacks on FATA to target suspected terrorist hideouts and U.S. administration is fully cognizant of 'verbal protests' by Pakistan leaders for public and political reasons since the PPP took over the government, according to U.S. sources."

"U.S. Drones Hitting Locals: Report" "The Post" (01/30)

"President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani were informed on Thursday by the national security agencies in a detailed report that mostly local tribesmen were targeted in U.S. drone attacks. According to well-placed sources, it has been disclosed in a report prepared by the intelligence agencies that the United States has stopped sharing intelligence information regarding their respected targets in the Tribal Areas of the Country."

"Three Alleged Indian Agents Arrested In Lahore" "Dawn" (01/30)

"Three men said to be Indian agents were arrested on Thursday for their alleged involvement in terrorist activities in the provincial capital (Lahore) and other parts of the country."

"U.S. Envoy Holbrooke Due Next Week" "Dawn," "The News," "Daily Times" (01/30)

"Ambassador Richard Holbrooke will travel to Afghanistan and Pakistan next week on his first visit to the region as a special U.S. Envoy for the two countries, the State Department said on Thursday."

"Pak Military Working Opaque: Mullen; Says Kayani Has Delivered And Is Committed To Change ISI Culture" "The News" (01/30)

"Of all the problems confronting the Obama administration, none is trickier than Pakistan - a nuclear power that has a war in Afghanistan on its western border, a tense confrontation with India on its eastern border and a deadly insurgency at home from Muslim militants who want to topple the pro-American government. At the crux of all three conflicts are the Pakistan Army and its intelligence service, known as the ISI. The army's pervasive power is summed up in a Pakistani joke: 'All countries have armies, but here, an army has a country.'... Mullen said that Kayani and his Intelligence Chief, Pasha, 'have committed very specifically to change the culture in ISI. They recognize that they've got to get out of where they've been, which is in support of these militants, to try to make deals, and that they've got to move beyond that.'"

"Obama Should Expand Pakistan Aid" "Daily Times" (01/30)

"A top American expert on South Asia, Bruce Riedel, has called for boosting economic and security assistance to Pakistan and improving the U.S. image in the South Asian country, and said unilateral drone strikes in the Tribal Areas have been effective but with a counterproductive element."

"No Military Solution To Afghan Issues, Says Inderfurth" "Daily Times" (01/30)

"Karl Inderfurth, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia during the second Clinton presidency, said there is no military solution to Afghanistan's problems and suggested diplomatic and political solutions to restore peace and stability."

"Troops Advance As Gunships Pound Swat Taliban Positions" "Daily Times" (01/30)

"The military operation against the Taliban in Swat continued on Thursday, with security forces, backed by artillery and helicopter gunships, advancing further into the valley, reportedly destroying a number of terrorist dens."

"Residence Of Judge, DIG Office Attacked" "Dawn" (01/30)

"The official residence of the civil judge and regional Qazi was blown up in Matta and the office of the DIG was attacked with rockets in Saidu Sharif on Thursday. Two security personnel, five militants and three civilians were killed and 32 suspected militants arrested as violence continued in different areas of Swat."

"Suicide Bombing Gang Busted, Claim Police" "Dawn" (01/30)

"Police claimed to have arrested nine suspected terrorists and seized 100kg of explosives, detonators and other material during a raid in a house in Rawalpindi on Thursday."

"'U.S. Spy' Killed In North Waziristan" "The Post" (01/30)

"Taliban militants shot dead a tribesman in tribal region, accusing him of spying for the United States, a local official said Thursday."

"U.S. Plans To Send Letter To Khamenei" "Dawn" (01/30)

"Ignoring Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's demand for an apology for 'U.S. actions against Iran over the past 60 years,' officials of Barack Obama's administration are said to have drafted a letter to Iran from the president aimed at unfreezing U.S.-Iranian relations and opening the way for face-to-face talks, reports the Guardian."

"U.S. May Be Pushed To The Brink Of Deflation" "Dawn" (01/30)

"The U.S. Federal Reserve officials on Thursday warned of a prolonged global economic slowdown that might push the United States to the brink of deflation. The U.S. Federal Open Market Committee, charged under U.S. law with overseeing the nation's open market operations, warned that its earlier prediction of a 'gradual recovery' in the US economy later this year had 'significant' risks of failing to materialize."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Gestures Aren't Enough," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/30)

"Since his inauguration Mr. Obama has done little to suggest that the Democratic administration will do away with old attitudes and adopt a non-partisan approach. This latter is important if the goal of a Palestinian homeland is to be achieved.... Where South Asia is concerned, Mr. Obama now plans a surge in American troop levels in Afghanistan, and going by the frequency of drone attacks, he seems to have embraced Bush's Fata policy whole hog. We hope that his desire for a new chapter in relations with the Muslim world will be translated into action, and that he possesses the common sense to realize that it is unresolved issues like Palestine and Kashmir that breed terrorists."

"Drone Attack," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (01/30)

"Such attacks, in fact, strengthen the terrorists instead of helping the cause of the war on terror. The drone attacks have resulted in intensifying suicide attacks against security personnel all over Pakistan. The incidents inevitably result in the loss of innocent lives.... If the U.S. does not revise its policy of violating our sovereignty, success in the war against terrorism will remain an elusive dream."

"Deadly Drone Attacks - Why No Reaction," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/30)

"Deadly drone attacks are increasing with the passage of every day resulting into killing of scores of innocent people and injuring many more. In this backdrop, it is highly regrettable that the kind of reaction that the situation deserves is almost missing especially at the political level.... There are no two opinions that people of Pakistan have zero tolerance to frequent violation of the country's

sovereignty but their leadership is failing them."

"Incomprehensible U.S. Policies And The Region's Future," an editorial in the Lahore-based Urdu daily "Waqt" (cir. 10,000) (01/30)

"America and world powers should look at the ground realities in order to make a decision to increase Pakistan's resource against terrorism. The spy planes attacks should end, for these attacks are creating hatred against America."

"More Drone Attacks," an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (01/30)

"So far, political and diplomatic inputs from both sides have been very small if not non-existent, making Pakistan hostage to developments on the war-front.... While U.S. Defence Secretary may not explain why drone attacks would continue, Pakistan government has to convince the people why these drones are not being intercepted."

"Curbing Militancy," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/30)

"The U.S., whose policies radicalized the tribal areas, including a traditionally peaceful Swat, into a militant stronghold, bears the primary responsibility to help heal the wounds. Unless the exercise is urgently undertaken, the battle for winning the hearts and minds will be lost."

"President Zardari's Offer To The U.S. And Our Interests," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (01/30)

"Instead of intensifying the military operation in the Tribal Areas, our political and military leaders should show America the door so that they depart -- taking with them the debris of their failures. No other option can take us towards peace and stability."

"Hurdles In Solving The Problems Of FATA," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (01/30)

"President Zardari's stand, that Pakistan immediately needs 1.5 billion dollars from the United States in the form of economic and military assistance, is also raising suspicions that perhaps the Pakistan government does not want to resolve FATA issue in the hunger of dollars, as until this issue carries on, Pak Army and the civil administration will gain dollars from the U.S."

"Army Chief's Visit To Swat," an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (01/30)

"Only the people of Pakistan together with the Pak Army can confront the challenges that the country is facing at the moment. Likewise the religious leaders should also play their role to quench fire set by the militants and Taliban. But this can be done only when our leaders concentrate on their religious, social and moral responsibilities rather than scoring points at the precarious security situation of Swat vale, and other conflict-hit areas."

"Not Operation, But Comprehensive Steps Imperative," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (01/30)

"In the present circumstances a decisive military operation in Swat valley is crucial, but the government must also not miss the development programs, and political measures to address the genuine problems of the local population. The U.S. administration should cooperate with Pakistan in providing assistance for the proposed development projects in the area."

"Swat: Restoration Of Government Writ," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (01/30)

"Pak Army Chief General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani has reiterated that the army has full capacity to enforce government's writ in Swat and tribal areas.... The army has already almost eliminated militancy

from Bajaur and restored government's writ satisfactorily. Swat is an area 'easier' than Bajaur. It seems that the 'silence' that the army had hitherto been keeping with respect to Swat due to unknown reasons has ended with the visit army chief's Swat visit."

"Some Aspects Of Discord In Swat," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (01/30)

". . . The brutal acts of militants are the consequences of the military operations. It is better to invite the tribal elders to Islamabad and find a way out of this problem."

"Dealing With Swat," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/30)

"Quite evidently, the 'inspiration,' if it can be called that, has come from events in Swat. The militant onslaught there must be stopped before the same kind of mayhem is created in other areas of the country. It is of course better to act late, rather than to fail to do so at all. Our decision makers must remember that as the horrific tales from Swat make their way into the international media, Pakistan's standing will continue to fall further. This must not be allowed to happen."

"Establishing Government's Writ In Swat Essential," an editorial in Karachi based left-wing Sindhi Daily "Awami Awaz" (Cir. 70,000) (01/30)

"Fundamentalism and extremism has been a curse for Pakistan which now has turned into Talibanization. American policies and attitude have also contributed in aggravating the situation. To defuse the situation, those who are proposing dialogue must not forget the outcome of earlier talks, which did not yield positive results."

"Parallel Courts In Swat," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/30)

"Instead of insisting that the situation is under control, Islamabad would do well to admit that things are out of hand. Only then can the executive branch and the military devise a strategy that stands a realistic chance of success.... Jirgas, which also represent a parallel judiciary system, are held regularly in Sindh, a province where they are banned. Sindh is free of militancy, yet the government is powerless to stamp out this barbaric practice. We are waiting to see how it will disallow Taliban courts."

"Open Letter To President Obama," an op-ed by Imran Khan in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/30)

"If the new U.S. administration continues the Bush administration's mantra of 'do more,' to which our inept leadership is likely to respond to by using more force, Pakistan could become even more accessible to forces of extremism leading to further instability that would spread across the region especially into India which already faces problems of extremism and secessionist movements. Such a scenario would benefit no one - certainly not Pakistan and certainly not the U.S. That is why your message of meaningful change, Mr. President, must guide your policies in this region also."

"Outsourcing Security," an op-ed by Ayesha Siddiqa in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/30)

"The fact that the Taliban problem has not been resolved as yet is a reflection of how outsourcing of security creates problems at different levels. The Americans initially outsourced the war to the Pakistani intelligence and Afghan warlords and couldn't roll them back. The Pakistanis subcontracted security work to the Taliban and the ball never returned to the GHQ's court. In Pakistan's case, it is more problematic because there have been fears that the military has not completely dumped the Taliban, an example of what happens when security is outsourced to non-state actors. The lashkars will be no different."

"Israel's War Hysteria, And Peace In The Region," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (01/30)

"Former President Jimmy Carter has rightly pointed out that terrorism cannot be eliminated until the Kashmir and Palestine issues are resolved. Even though Mr. Carter was aware of this reality during his Presidency, he took no step to resolve these issues. However, it would be a great achievement if he is able to convince the new U.S. administration of this reality."

Patterson